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THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONFERENCE OF THE DIRECTORS OF HIGHER MEDICAL EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS, INSTITUTES FOR THE ADVANCED TRAINING OF
PHYSICIANS AND SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH INSTITUTES

-USSR-

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[Following is the translation of an article by M. I. Chaplyuk
and D. A. Bassalyk in Sovetskaya Meditsina, No 8, Moscow,
1960, pages 148-150.]

The All-Russian Conference of the Directors of Higher Medical Educational Institutions, Institutes for the Advanced Training of Physicians and Scientific-Research Institutes was held from 22-23 April 1960, in Moscow, in the Ministry of Health RSFSR.

Three basic problems were the order of the day at the conference:

1. The training of scientific-pedagogic cadres in higher educational institutions and scientific research institutes.
2. The planning and organizing of scientific research.
3. The teaching of clinical disciplines in medical institutes of the Russian Federation.

V. V. Trofimov, the Deputy Minister of Health RSFSR, gave a lengthy report on the first problem, pointing out the tasks set by the Central Committee CPSU and the Council of Ministers USSR for medical workers and the medical sciences. The speaker especially emphasized that the most important condition for the further development of the medical sciences and health as a whole is the high level of qualified scientific and pedagogic cadres.

Significant attention was given in the report to the training of scientific and pedagogic cadres in higher educational institutions and institutes for the advanced training of physicians of the Ministry of Health RSFSR. The speaker mentioned that in 1960 more than 10,000 scientific workers were at work in the higher educational institutions and GIDUV [Gosudarstvennyy institut dlya spetsializatsii usovershenstvovaniya vrachey - State institute for Specialization and Advanced Training of physicians.] RSFSR, of which about 41 percent were candidates in the sciences and nine percent were doctors of science. Almost 98 percent of the total number of positions of heads of chairs and independent courses were filled in the current school year. The positions of heads of chairs and courses are occupied as follows: about 53 percent by doctors of sciences, 40.5 percent by candidates of the sciences; 6.5 percent of the positions of heads of chairs were filled by persons not having scientific degrees. Docent positions in higher educational institutions and GIDUV are almost 82 percent filled and mainly by candidates of

the sciences (93.0 percent). In scientific research institutes of the Ministry of Health RSFSR, 7.4 percent of the scientific colleagues are doctors of science and 36 percent are candidates of the sciences. In emphasizing the small growth in the number of doctors of science, the speaker mentioned the decrease in the percent of doctors of science who headed basic clinical chairs.

In the opinion of the speaker, the following basic causes have interfered with the training of scientific cadres:

1. An absence of active planning in the preparation of doctors of science on the part of institutes and the Ministry of Health RSFSR.
2. A loss by a number of higher educational institutions of their former positions in creating progressive, advanced scientific schools and schools of domestic medicine.
3. The vicious practice of wage-levelling among scientists who are actively training for a change in their scientific qualifications and scientists who are not engaged in or poorly engaged in the training of scientific-pedagogic cadres.
4. Shortcomings in the training of scientific cadres within post-graduate courses and clinical internship.
5. A lack of interest in conducting competitive examinations for state and vacant positions.
6. Poor attention to the scientific work of practicing physicians.
7. The vicious practice of scientific workers holding more than one position.

As for the shortcomings in planning, V. V. Trofimov mentioned the absence of research in individual and especially pressing problems of the medical sciences, such as the disproportion between the requirements and training of doctors of science in individual specialities, and the unfounded underestimating of the plans for training doctors of science (for example, in the Tomsk, Voronezh, and Ryazan Medical Institutes), and other problems.

The speaker emphasized the need for reexamining the procedure of providing individual chairs with scientific equipment and staffs, taking into consideration the activity of the chair (or laboratory) in training cadres.

He gave serious attention in his report to the training of cadres in post-graduate courses and in clinical internship.

Work in conducting competitive examinations for filling staff and vacant positions was seriously criticised at the conference. The conducting of such competitions is sometimes done with a lack of interest, and councils of institutes in examining competitive materials, do not give a proper critical evaluation of the work of competitors, and do not listen to their reports on the training of cadres. Sometimes candidates are repeatedly chosen who have no prospects whatsoever for development, who are not carrying out scientific work and who are not training cadres (Bashkir, Saratov, Rostov, and other medical institutes).

Important attention was given in the report to the problem of interest in the scientific work of practicing physicians.

Docent I. A. Ivanov, director of the First Leningrad Medical Institute, gave a co-report on the training of cadres for scientific-pedagogic work in that institute. Prof D. A. Zhdanov, Chairman of the Scientific Medical Council of the Ministry of Health RSFSR reported on the "Planning and Organization of Scientific Research in Higher Medical Educational Institutions and Scientific Research Institutes of the RSFSR."

A lively discussion ensued over the reports which were heard, and concrete recommendations were accepted on the training of scientific-pedagogic cadres in higher educational institutions and scientific research institutes.

S. N. Yagubov, Chief of the Main Administration of Educational Institutions reported on the status and tasks for the further improvement of instruction in clinical disciplines in the medical institutes of the Russian Federation and threw light on the following problems.

1. The condition and tasks for improving the teaching of clinical disciplines under hospital conditions.

2. Strengthening the polyclinical training of students in medical institutes.

3. Further tasks in improving the practical and educational training of students of medical and pharmaceutical institutes.

Prof I. Ya. Ivanov, director of the Leningrad Hospital and Hygiene Medical Institute, reported on experience in the organization of practical courses according to the study and work system of education.

Studies are being arranged according to the alternating work-study system in the chairs of departmental therapy, pediatrics, and surgery.

These chairs are conducting work with students on the whole along two lines: the care of patients and the participation of students in the rounds of professors, lecturers, and assistants.

Daily control over the thoroughness and quality of theoretical training for students is the most important problem and one which has still not been solved satisfactorily.

In regard to this, the experience of the Chair of Departmental Therapy of the Kemerovo Medical Institute deserves attention, where, besides writing and defending the "academic history of a disease, the method of so-called educational epicrisis has been introduced, which consists in the assistant telling each student which disease he will have to deal with tomorrow. At home the student studies the appropriate literature and the next day examines the patient and writes an epicrisis which he also defends at the patient's bedside. The majority of chairs of departmental and hospital surgery have been going very timidly along the road of teaching self-reliance to students. As a result chairs of surgery have remained behind chairs of a therapeutic type in inculcating students with the habits of independent medical activity.

In connection with this we must salute the experience of the hospital surgical clinics of the Krasnoyarsk and Ryazan medical institutes where each student in the VI course must participate actively in all operative difficulties of the patients he treats.

At the same time the "overactive" surgical activity of individual students who is entrusted with the independent performing of operations is completely inadmissible.

In turning to polyclinical training of students in medical institutes, S. N. Yagubov indicated that there are known instances when some professors and instructors, among them distinguished scientists, have obviously underestimated the role of the polyclinical training of students in the system of the teaching clinical disciplines.

Several medical institutes must be censured for their slowness in not using new, well equipped types of polyclinics for pedagogic purposes, being satisfied instead with old polyclinical setups where it is impossible to organize a correct pedagogic procedure.

On the other hand studies with students, especially in the final course, have been organized in an exemplary manner in several higher medical educational institutions. For example, the Chair of Hospital Therapy of the Irkutsk Medical Institute is conducting studies with students in the sixth course not only in the polyclinic but also in the dispensaries of industrial enterprises where the students work as shop interns. Students working in the polyclinics fulfill all the functions of the district therapists.

The Chair of Hospital Pediatrics of the II Moscow Medical Institute also conducts its work in a similar manner with students in the sixth course. Prof K. F. Popov, Head of the Chair, reported on this in detail.

The achievements obtained by several institutes in organizing the polyclinical training regards on the whole students in the sixth course.

The polyclinical training of students must begin with the third course. Studies in the polyclinic must strengthen the acquired habits of students in examining patients.

Prof V. K. Suprunov, Director of the Kuban Medical Institute, spoke in his report on the experience in working with a partly altered educational plan for the sixth course wherein the polyclinical training of students is increased. Five years have passed since the subinternship for students of the sixth course was given up in 1955 as unjustified, and the transition [was made] to training general practitioners. This measure was prompted by the mode and practice of public health.

At the present time Soviet public health is requiring that higher medical educational institutions train physicians basically for work in rural medical districts. The educational plan in the sixth course must be setup in accordance with this.

Experience in years past has shown that physicians who have been graduated from institutes and have been sent to distant oblasts, krais and autonomous republics of the Russian Federation are not acquainted with the local characteristics of these regions and are not able to organize treatment and preventive measures in combatting the diseases which characterize the so-called regional pathology. For this reason it is necessary to organize the additional training of future physicians in the problems of regional pathology of those localities where they will be practicing after graduating from an institute.

In organizing and conducting the practical training of students in 1959, the higher medical educational institutions were guided by the law on "Strengthening the Connections of Schools with Life and on the Further Development of the System of Popular Education in the USSR." The principle of continuity was laid down in organizing the practical experience of students. Students of all courses underwent practical training for the first time last year.

The attraction of students in the first and second courses to caring for patients or to working in hospitals and hygiene establishments and the obligatory service by students of the third course in nursing practice have been of great significance in training and forming future physicians.

The practical summer training after the fourth course strengthens the students' habits in independent and clinical thinking, and acquaints them with the practical foundations of the organization of soviet public health.

The practical training of students in the fifth course, which was carried out for the first time in the 1958-1959 school year, made it possible for students to apply in practice the knowledge received over a five year period in the institute. Without question this was a great stimulus for a deeper study of special and clinical disciplines in the final sixth course.

S. N. Yagubov in the final part of his report dwelt on the shortcomings in the organization and procedure for practice training of students and on the tasks in improving this work.

Problems concerning the organization and procedure for practice training of students were also expressed in the reports of the following persons: Prof N. F. Rupasov, Director of the Izhevskiy Medical Institute, V. S. Shklyayev, docent, Director of the Perm Pharmaceutical Institute, Prof V. G. Budylin, Director of the Stavropol Medical Institute, Prof G. F. Yershov, Head of the Chair of the Organization of Public Health, Rostov Medical Institute, and Prof A. I. Sorkina, Head of the Chair of General Surgery, Irkutsk Medical Institute.